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"We must open wider the doors of opportunity
for the good of our country and all our people"

President Eisenhower

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NEWS

Committee for RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Under Secretary, Department of the Interior
Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture (Chairman)
Under Secretary, Department of Commerce
Under Secretary, Department of Labor
Under Secretary, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Administrator, Small Business Administration
Member, Council of Economic Advisers

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Five additional States and Puerto Rico have started a Rural Development Program, bringing the total to 30 States, the Department of Agriculture announced September 30. The new States include Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Nebraska, and Montana. Florida, not previously listed, organized rural development in two northern counties early last summer. In addition several new pilot counties have been proposed in those States which have been taking part in the Rural Development Program during the past year.

New pilot counties and areas proposed for 1957-58 by State committees are: Arkansas (Madison and Woodruff); Florida (Suwannee and Washington); Michigan (Alger); Mississippi (Amite); Montana (Ravalli); Nebraska (Sherman); Nevada (Lincoln); Oklahoma (Latimer); Pennsylvania (Schuylkill); Washington (Stevens). All counties and areas listed previously continue in the Rural Development Program.

GEORGIA REGIONAL CONFERENCE HOST TO SECRETARY BENSON, OTHER LEADERS.

Some 250 representatives of 35 government and private agencies in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, and Puerto Rico attended the fourth regional conference on rural development held at Athens, Georgia, September 25-26. Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, Under Secretary of Commerce Walter Williams and other national and State leaders addressed the public session of the conference.

Secretary Benson told the delegates that the Rural Development Program is an attempt to speed up needed economic changes occurring throughout the Nation and to "widen their impact to include areas that have not yet benefited materially."

"In recommending the Rural Development Program," he said, "I was determined that rural leaders and agency workers in pilot counties would have an opportunity to take the lead in program development at the local level. The aim is to encourage local initiative and enterprise, not to put a bridle on them."

The Rural Development Program has three basic aims, he said:

"1. To strengthen industry in low-income rural areas and widen the range of off-farm opportunities.

This is one of a series of periodic reports on Rural Development Program activities of business, farm, civic, government and other community leadership working together. If you have information that might be of interest to those participating in the program or you wish to receive this Newsletter, address communications to the Editor, Rural Development Program News, Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

"2. To help families who want to stay in farming gain the tools, land, and information that will permit them to farm successfully.

"3. To help all people in these areas arm themselves with adequate training and good health."

"If I were asked to pick out the single most important result of the Rural Development Program, I would say it is this: In many pilot areas, a general attitude of resignation and complacency, a feeling that nothing can be done about economic ills, has been replaced by a new awareness of community resources, community strength, and the real possibility that incomes can be raised."

Under Secretary Williams said that, "unless more job opportunities can be developed in our rural low-income areas, the already staggering problems of our larger cities will continue to get even larger as people from low-income areas continue to move to the city...it is better for our national security to have new economic growth more evenly distributed."

Mr. Williams, a member of the Committee for RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, said that agencies responsible for both farm and non-farm programs need to cooperate more extensively in rural development work.

Harllee Branch, President of the Southern Company, in his address said that American industry has close ties with agriculture. Industry must look to rural areas for its source of raw material and vigorous, young manpower. He also discussed the importance of farmers as customers for the manufactured products of industry.

Other speakers at this opening session were Marshall O. Watkins, director of extension in Florida, who described progress in rural development in the three-State area, and Dr. O. C. Aderhold, president of the University of Georgia, who presided. At the close of the 2-day conference Dean Harry J. Reed, recently appointed as Coordinator for the Rural Development Program, told the conferees that county leaders need to make "the best use of all their resources as part of a total plan." He called rural development "one of the finest programs that have ever been presented to local people to help them determine their own goals and make the best use of their resources."

J. W. Fanning, chairman of the division of agricultural economics, University of Georgia, said farm agency workers have an increasing concern with the programs and development of the total rural community, including towns as well as farms. In counseling young people living in rural areas, educational agency workers need to ask, "to what extent (they) are giving young people...a broad picture of opportunities both in and outside agriculture," Mr. Fanning said.

The Athens conference included eight work group sessions. Agency representatives and pilot county leaders from the three-State area and Puerto Rico discussed problems of rural development and methods of improving the program. The Georgia Extension Service will issue a final report on the conference, including work group findings.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION*

West Virginia: In Summers County, a pilot county in southern West Virginia, the local farmers' market has been reorganized to an auction-type market.

Missouri: To raise money for county resource promotion, a Taney County subcommittee on industry has organized an industrial improvement association and sold memberships to businessmen and others. The fund will be used to pay for direct mail and magazine advertising and travel expenses of county representatives.

North Carolina: The latest issue of Morris McGough's Asheville Agricultural Development Council newsletter reports that seven rural communities are building community centers, and one community has a hospital under construction, in great part with volunteer labor.

Alabama: In Chilton County, where three-fourths of the land is in forests, Rural Development committees have helped set up several wood-using industries and markets. A parallel effort is being made on the educational side -- to help farmers manage their woodlot resources better.

Tennessee: East Tennessee this summer organized an area-wide community development council to strengthen rural and suburban community development and increase cooperation among rural, urban groups.

Kentucky: Each of the pilot counties taking part in Kentucky's Rural Development Program has set up a health leadership group within the county program. A principal accomplishment to date: town-county clean-up campaigns and better sanitation in some areas.

Virginia: Carroll County's development committee has taken the leadership in a survey of industrial sites and manpower. The Virginia Division of Planning and Economic Development backed up the committee with technical advice and assistance.

Arkansas: To find out what rural families in Phillips County really need in the way of new services, leaders in the county Rural Development Program are making tape recordings of their comments in community meetings. The recordings are replayed for county Rural Development leaders and other business, farm and civic groups.

*Based on reports of development projects and activities throughout the Nation.

FIFTH REGIONAL MEETING IN ASHEVILLE OCTOBER 23-25.

A North Carolina-Virginia regional conference on rural development, fifth in the current series of meetings, opens October 23 in Asheville, North Carolina. True D.

Morse, Under Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Harry J. Reed, Coordinator for the Rural Development Program, C. H. Bostian, Chancellor of North Carolina State College, and William Algary, an Asheville business official will address the public session which starts at 7:30 p.m. October 23, in the George Vanderbilt Hotel. David S. Weaver, director of extension in North Carolina, will preside. Registration for this regional conference takes place in the Langren Hotel, Asheville, where the ten workshop groups will meet.

SECRETARY'S ANNUAL RURAL
DEVELOPMENT REPORT ISSUED.

Each September Secretary of Agriculture Benson issues a detailed report to the President on the Rural Development Program. Released on September 30, this year's report describes more than 35 typical development projects started in pilot counties. The Secretary's report also gives a detailed picture of rural development in one county -- Avoyelles Parish, Louisiana -- to illustrate the program.

"The past 12 months," Secretary Benson reports, "have been decisive in establishing an effective pilot Rural Development Program. Counties and areas are demonstrating methods, organization and services that can be effective in all rural areas...Rural Development is truly a demonstration program."

The report cites six major actions during the past year "strengthening the Rural Development Program and broadening its scope." These include:

1. The addition of six states and Puerto Rico.
2. Increase in number of pilot counties to nearly 100, including trade area programs.
3. Congressional support evidenced in increased appropriations.
4. Appointment of Dr. Harry J. Reed as national coordinator.
5. Stepped-up assistance from several USDA agencies in program development.
6. Inauguration of regional conferences bringing together major operating personnel of farm and non-farm agencies.

"Much of what has been accomplished in the past 12 months," says the Secretary, "results from the determination of local citizens in pilot counties and areas to take responsibility and work out their own problems. These local leaders deserve much of the real credit for establishing the Rural Development Program on a firm basis."

Copies of the Secretary's 1957 report on rural development are being sent to State rural development committees for distribution to pilot county leaders. A limited number of copies are also available in the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.

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Dean Harry J. Reed, Coordinator for the Rural Development Program, will attend the Land Grant College Association meeting in Denver, Colo., November 11-14, to discuss the program with State leaders.

Feature articles on the Rural Development Program have appeared in four magazines this month: The Nation's Agriculture, Farm and Ranch, The Farmer Stockman, and Methodist Woman. Farm and Ranch says that "one of the most promising answers to the farm problem lies in (the program.)"

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